

principle that no particular religious sect can seize control of state power and then persecute members of other religious groups, but that is what is happening in so many places all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, our experience in the separation of church and state and standing up for the free exercise of religion is something that we can continue to proudly promote to the rest of the world, and we do have something that we think we can teach other nations that want to follow the path of democracy and freedom.

As the U.S. works to advance human rights, it is critical that we put this question of freedom of thought, freedom of conscience right at the heart of our efforts. Everyone must be able to practice their faith—or no faith at all—without the threat of government violence and persecution.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this excellent measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a co-sponsor and a senior Member of the House of Representatives, I rise in strong support of this bipartisan resolution, H. Res. 512, "Calling for the global repeal of blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws".

First and foremost, I would like to recognize and thank Congressman JAMIE RASKIN for his leadership on this vital resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution calls upon the President and the Department of State to prioritize the repeal of blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws in bilateral relationships between the United States and countries that have such laws.

It also designates countries that enforce such laws as "countries of particular concern" with respect to religious freedom.

Furthermore, H. Res. 512 opposes efforts by the United Nations to implement an international anti-blasphemy norm.

Lastly, the resolution calls on the governments of countries that enforce such laws to either amend or repeal them as well as to release anyone imprisoned pursuant to them.

Blasphemy laws, as is noted in the resolution, lead to religious intolerance, discrimination and violence.

Moreover, these laws are often weaponized to target marginalized religious communities.

Charges can be based on false accusations and are commonly brought forth for sectarian or political purposes.

In 2019, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom released its 20th Annual Report, recommending that the U.S. Department of State designate sixteen nations as "countries of particular concern" due to their severe suppression of religious freedom.

For example: In Burma, a predominantly Buddhist nation, the Rohingya Muslim people have been subject to what the U.N. high commissioner for human rights has called "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing";

In China, over 1 million ethnic Uyghur and Kazakh Muslims have been arbitrarily detained in concentration camps styled as "political education" camps, where they are subject to torture and inhumane conditions;

In Iran, the Baha'i community is treated by the government as a band of heretics, and, as

of February 2017, at least 90 Baha'i were held in prison solely for their religious beliefs;

In Russia, Jehovah's Witnesses have been banned as an extremist group, and their properties have been seized and liquidated by order of the government. Dozens of individuals have been arrested on extremism charges and remain in custody or under house arrest; and

The right to worship freely is one of the founding and most essential principles of the United States.

As the world's oldest democracy, America has a responsibility to protect the freedoms of speech, expression, and religion against official persecution around the world.

Throughout my tenure in Congress, I have been a fierce defender of human rights, and this resolution is a small but important step in safeguarding the individual freedoms of choosing one's religion, or no religion at all, as well as worshipping and thinking freely no matter where you live.

With this in mind, I am proud to be a leader on this resolution, and I urge all Members on both sides of the aisle to join me in voting for H. Res. 512, "Calling for the global repeal of blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 512, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 965, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CONDEMNING IRAN'S STATE-SPONSORED PERSECUTION OF ITS BAHAI MINORITY

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 823) condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 823

Whereas, in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018, Congress declared that it deplored the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Baha'i community and would hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Baha'i faith;

Whereas, since 1979, Iranian authorities have killed or executed more than 200 Baha'i leaders, and more than 10,000 have been dismissed from government and university jobs;

Whereas the Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

(A/74/188) dated July 18, 2019, provides, in part—

(1) the Iranian authorities and the Iranian criminal justice system regard the Baha'is as "unprotected infidels"; the Baha'i faith is also "regarded as a misguided sect"; and "Baha'i worship and religious practices are deemed heresy";

(2) "Baha'is have been murdered with impunity and violations of their human rights have not been investigated.";

(3) members of the Baha'i faith "frequently face charges, such as, 'breaching national security', 'propaganda against the holy regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran', or 'propaganda activities against the regime in the interests of the Baha'i sect'";

(4) "Since August 2005, more than 1,168 Baha'is have been arrested and charged with vaguely worded offences.";

(5) "There were a total of 95 Baha'is reportedly arrested in 2018, compared with at least 84 in 2017 and 81 in 2016.";

(6) "On 1 January 2019, the court of appeal of Isfahan reportedly condemned, in separate judgments, nine Baha'i citizens to a total of 48 years of prison. They had been charged with 'membership of the illegal Baha'i community and propaganda against the regime by spreading the Baha'i faith in the society.'";

(7) directed by a 2007 letter from the Security Unit of the Public Place Supervision Office of the Islamic Republic of Iran to police commanders throughout the country, Iranian authorities continue to apply economic pressure against the Baha'i community, by banning them from specific professions and "halting their entry to 'high earning businesses'"; and

(8) "Since 2013, there have been more than 803 incidents of violations of economic rights of the Baha'is, including arbitrary shop closures, unfair dismissals from employment and the actual or threatened revocation of business licenses.";

Whereas the Department of State's International Religious Freedom Report for 2019, Iran section, provides, in part—

(1) "Non-Shia Muslims and those affiliated with a religion other than Islam, especially members of the Baha'i community, continued to face societal discrimination and harassment, and employers experienced social pressures not to hire Baha'is or to dismiss them from their private sector jobs."; and

(2) "The law bars Baha'is from founding their own educational institutions. A Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology order requires universities to exclude Baha'is from access to higher education or expel them if their religious affiliation becomes known.";

Whereas, on March 11, 2020, the Department of State released the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019 and, in connection with Iran, the report provides, in part—

(1) Iranian authorities "barred Baha'i students from higher education", and in 2019, denied enrollment to at least 22 Baha'i college applicants solely because of their religious affiliation despite passing the national admissions test;

(2) "The country materially contributed to human rights abuses . . . in Yemen, through its support for Houthi rebels and directing authorities in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen to harass and detain Baha'is because of their religious affiliation."; and

(3) "In July 2019, Iran Wire, a human rights reporting agency, reported the case of Hamed Rezvani, a Baha'i musician and teacher, who left his home in Isfahan in December 2018 and has not been heard from since. Repeated requests by the Rezvani family for information from police and local intelligence have not produced any information about his disappearance.";

Whereas according to the 2020 Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)—

(1) “There are more than 300,000 Baha’is in Iran, who together constitute the largest non-Muslim religious minority in the country.”;

(2) “Security forces also prevented the burial of two deceased Baha’i individuals in a Baha’i cemetery in Kerman after it was sealed in March 2018. In October, the body of a deceased Baha’i woman was exhumed four days after her burial and abandoned in a desert area outside the town of Jaban.”;

(3) There is a “particular uptick in the persecution of Baha’is”, including of local government officials who advocated on behalf of Baha’is, and the Iranian government blamed Baha’is, without evidence, for wide-spread popular protests in 2019; and

(4) “In July 2019, Twitter banned several official Iranian media accounts for incitement against Baha’is in Iran.”;

Whereas the Baha’i International Community documented a more than 50 percent increase in hate propaganda directed against the Baha’is in the twelve-month period ending August 2020 compared to prior years with more than 9,500 such articles, videos, or web pages appearing in Iranian government-controlled or government-sponsored media;

Whereas Iran is a member of the United Nations and a signatory to both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, among other international human rights treaties, without reservation;

Whereas section 105 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8514) authorizes the President to impose sanctions on individuals “responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, the commission of serious human rights abuses against citizens of Iran or their family members on or after June 12, 2009”;

Whereas the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-158) amends and expands the authorities established under the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 to sanction Iranian human rights abusers; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns the Government of Iran’s state-sponsored persecution of its Baha’i minority and its continued violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

(2) calls on the Government of Iran—

(A) to immediately release all imprisoned or detained Baha’is, together with all other prisoners held solely on account of their religion;

(B) to end its state-sponsored campaign of hate propaganda against the Baha’is; and

(C) to reverse state-imposed policies denying Baha’is and members of other religious minorities equal opportunities to higher education, earning a livelihood, due process under the law, and the free exercise of religious practices;

(3) calls on the President and the Secretary of State, in cooperation with responsible nations, to continue to condemn the Government of Iran’s continued violation of human rights and demand the immediate release of prisoners held solely on account of their religion; and

(4) urges the President and the Secretary of State to utilize available authorities to impose sanctions on officials of the Government of Iran and other individuals directly responsible for serious human rights abuses, including abuses against the Baha’i community of Iran.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHIO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 823.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution condemning the government of Iran’s persecution of its besieged Baha’i minority. I thank all of my colleagues who have worked on this, including on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mr. DEUTCH and Mr. WILSON, for their leadership on this measure.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Iran has carried out an inhumane campaign of religious persecution against the Baha’i minority, its largest non-Muslim religious minority in the country. The regime has closed Baha’i-owned shops and stores, forbidden Baha’i citizens from holding government jobs, and denied Baha’i children access to school. Members of the Baha’i community have been unjustly arrested and prosecuted and executed, targeted solely for their religious beliefs.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. stands for the freedom of religious exercise, and we must speak up in the face of this theocratic injustice. We cannot forget those who struggled for their basic religious freedom and civil liberty in Iran.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution sends a strong message to the Iranian Government that the Government of the United States will not remain silent in the face of such terrible oppression. It calls for the immediate release of all imprisoned or detained Baha’is, and urges sanctions on Iranian officials and others who are responsible for these human rights abuses, including abuses against the Baha’i community.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan resolution, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. YOHIO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this body is no stranger to the human rights abuses committed by the Iranian regime. The Islamic Republic of Iran is the world’s largest state sponsor of terror and has regularly attacked and detained those who disagree with them, including even their own people and American citizens.

Today, we focus on the regime’s religious persecution of the Baha’i, Iran’s largest religious minority group. The Baha’i in Iran are regularly subject to

arbitrary interrogations and arrests without due process. They are often denied employment and access to higher education. Their cemeteries have been vandalized, and many of their leaders have been executed. Moreover, Iranian state media publishes anti-Baha’i hate propaganda, exposing them to prejudices and even potentially violent attacks by their neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, the Trump administration has admirably used sanctions to punish Iran’s human rights abusers, but we cannot let up until all people in Iran, including the Baha’i, have the right to practice their faith freely. With this resolution, we vow to continue to hold human rights abusers accountable, including those who target the Baha’i.

The Iranian regime must end their persecution of the Baha’i by releasing those who have been illegally imprisoned, by ending their hate-filled propaganda campaign against the Baha’i, and by reversing policies that the Baha’is equal opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. YOHIO. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for his leadership on this very important topic.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 823, which condemns the Iranian Government’s persecution of the Baha’i minority. As an original cosponsor of this measure myself, I thank Mr. DEUTCH and Mr. WILSON for their work to bring it to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, as a former chairman of the Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa and International Terrorism myself, I have long observed how the Iranian Government has repressed its own people, stifled their voices and their freedoms, and systematically abused human rights. Nowhere is this more evident than in the mullahs’ persecution of members of the Baha’i faith.

Mr. Speaker, since the Iranian Revolution, Iran has executed hundreds of Baha’is, while 10,000 Baha’is have been dismissed from their jobs, and a number of their holy sites have been desecrated. Baha’is also have seen their homes and businesses raided, their children prohibited from attending college, and their property confiscated. This cruel persecution comes despite the fact that Iran has nothing to fear from the Baha’i. The Baha’i faith espouses the values of peace and unity, cooperation, education, interfaith harmony, and an end to prejudice. Wherever Baha’is live, they strive to be good citizens, devoted to service and universal respect for all people.

Mr. Speaker, this includes here in the United States. Since arriving over 120 years ago, members of the Baha’i faith

have established themselves as patriotic and productive citizens in all 50 States. I want to specifically honor the Baha'i community in my community in Cincinnati. One of their churches is about a mile down the street from my home, and I have had the opportunity to meet their representatives several times and come to learn how they have enriched our city of Cincinnati back home.

With these values and contributions in mind, the Iranian persecution of the Baha'i is clearly barbaric and shows the true nature of that wicked regime in Iran.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me and join others on both sides of the aisle in condemning the persecution by supporting this resolution.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, one of the principles this country was founded upon was the freedom to worship. This is a right that people all around the world should have, including the people of Iran. Resolutions like this remind the world that the United States of America will not turn a blind eye to religious persecution.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) for their leadership in introducing this bipartisan resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support H. Res. 823, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, thank Mr. DEUTCH and Mr. WILSON for their hard work on this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, American foreign policy must work to advance and protect basic human rights around the world, including religious freedom and the rights of religious minorities. When we see human rights violations, like the ones the Iranian Government has inflicted on the Baha'i community, we must speak out. We must pursue justice for the victims and we must hold the perpetrators accountable. We must defend people nonviolently exercising their faith against governments violently imposing their will on the public.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is a step in the direction of aggressive defense of human rights, and I am pleased to support it. I urge all of our colleagues to support this bipartisan measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 823, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: "A resolution

condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINED UNITED STATES LEADERSHIP TO ACCELERATING GLOBAL PROGRESS AGAINST MATERNAL AND CHILD MALNUTRITION

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 189) recognizing the importance of sustained United States leadership to accelerating global progress against maternal and child malnutrition and supporting United States Agency for International Development's commitment to global nutrition through its multi-sectoral nutrition strategy, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 189

Whereas 151 million children under the age of 5 in the world—22 percent—are stunted, or chronically undernourished, and in countries highly affected by undernutrition, stunting affects 1 in every 3 children;

Whereas wasting, or acute malnutrition, continues to threaten the lives of an estimated 7.5 percent or nearly 51 million children under the age of 5 globally, and more than 38 million children under the age of 5 are overweight;

Whereas malnutrition directly or indirectly causes 45 percent of all deaths—2.6 million—of children under age 5 annually and puts those who survive at risk of impaired brain development, lower IQ, weakened immune systems, and greater risk of serious diseases;

Whereas undernourished adolescent girls have impaired cognitive ability and productivity and their future babies are at increased risk for low birth weight and death;

Whereas iron deficiency anemia, associated with undernutrition, contributes to 1 in 5 maternal deaths (or 20 percent of maternal mortality);

Whereas poor maternal nutrition contributes to poor fetal development and low birth weight, and an estimated 60 to 80 percent of neonatal deaths occur in low birth weight babies;

Whereas a large body of scientific evidence supports the benefits of improved breastfeeding practices on the short-term and long-term health and development of children and their mothers;

Whereas a growing evidence base demonstrates that reducing maternal and child malnutrition, especially in the critical 1,000 days between pregnancy and age 2, is imperative to ending preventable maternal and child deaths, improving cognitive and physical development, and strengthening children's immune systems to bolster resistance to disease;

Whereas leading economists and Nobel Laureates have identified improving child nutrition as the most cost-effective way to enhance global health and development;

Whereas the United States Agency for International Development's Multi-Sectoral

Nutrition Strategy's approach addresses both direct and underlying causes of malnutrition, and its focus on linking humanitarian assistance with development programming helps build resilience to shocks in vulnerable communities;

Whereas malnutrition is a universal issue that no country in the world can afford to overlook, and countries with high burdens of malnutrition, including stunting, wasting, anemia, and micronutrient deficiency, will struggle to achieve sustainable and equitable economic growth;

Whereas the United States plays a lead role supporting the goals of Scaling Up Nutrition, a global movement of 60 countries to prioritize nutrition, particularly during the 1,000-day window of opportunity between a mother's pregnancy and her child's second birthday, through effective policy and dedicated national resources; and

Whereas the world has reduced undernutrition since 1990, yet global progress has been too slow to ensure each child can attain a full and prosperous future regardless of where he or she was born and at the current pace, the global community will not reach its global nutrition targets set for 2025: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) reaffirms that—

(A) food security and good nutrition in early childhood saves lives and lays the foundation for healthy physical and cognitive growth and development;

(B) the potential benefit of good nutrition is life-long and influences a child's entire future, with entire communities and nations ultimately prospering;

(C) the right nutrition helps children learn, helps protect them from illness, increases their productivity and earning potential, and supports the well-being and health of their future offspring; and

(D) women who are well-nourished and do not suffer from anemia are less likely to die in childbirth and to give birth to children who are malnourished, breaking the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition;

(2) reaffirms that—

(A) good nutrition is also an economic issue central to reducing poverty and putting countries on path to economic development;

(B) adults who were well-nourished as children earn up to 46 percent more than those who were malnourished;

(C) countries with a very high burden of early childhood malnutrition have lower economic growth rates due to lost income and productivity; and

(D) the cost to nations is substantial with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) losses estimated between 3 to 16 percent with overall potential impacts to the global economy as high as \$3.5 trillion per year;

(3) supports United States leadership in helping developing countries meet the nutritional needs of women and children, and supports continued efforts;

(4) supports United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) recognition that nutrition interventions are among the lifesaving interventions that can have the greatest impact in ending preventable child and maternal deaths;

(5) supports the use of the USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy, the United States Government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan, and the Global Food Security Strategy as platforms through which to help reach global nutrition targets by 2025, as agreed to at the World Health Assembly in 2012;

(6) acknowledges the vision and goals of the Scaling Up Nutrition movement as a